



Jobs Act for Public K-12 & Higher Education Institutions

Walla Walla Electric / Valley Mechanical, Inc.

About the Jobs Act:

The Jobs Act for Public K-12 and Higher Education Institutions was funded through the 2010 Supplemental Capital Budget – ESHB 2836 Section 1016. \$50 million was given to Commerce. Commerce awarded 77 grants totaling \$42.5 million. For more information:

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The Washington State Department of Commerce's Jobs Act money couldn't have come at a better time for two Walla Walla businesses.

"It came at a period when we had very little work and it helped us a lot," said John Mauer, co-owner Valley Mechanical. "It filled a hole in the business," said Spike Teal, vice-president Walla Walla Electric.

Walla Walla's economy had stayed on a relatively even keel until the last two years of the recession. But in 2010, the local economy felt the recession's impacts. Both Valley Mechanical and Walla Walla Electric experienced their leanest year in a combined 63 years of doing business.

Valley Mechanical's business was down between 50 - 60 percent of its normal workload. To stay in business they laid off four union employees and took money out of the business' reserves. "In almost 30 years of doing business, 2010 was the hardest I've ever seen it," said Mauer.

Walla Walla Electric also laid off six electricians and took money out of the company's reserves to stay in business. Then they heard Walla Walla Public Schools had received Jobs Act money.

The Legislature created the Jobs Act program to help increase construction jobs and to make K-12 public schools and higher educational facilities more energy efficient. The Jobs Act \$50 million was funded through the 2010 Supplemental Capital budget (ESHB 2836 Section 1016).

Walla Walla Public Schools received \$350,000 to improve energy efficiency at Pioneer Middle School. Both Valley Mechanical and Walla Walla Electric were selected by the school district to install new heating systems, controls, and lighting. "It was a great deal for us, because we were able to hire 12 additional employees for almost 60 days," said Mauer.

And Walla Walla Electric didn't have to lay off any more workers. "The state money helped keep people employed and where there is work there are jobs," Teal said.

Both Mauer and Teal were very pleased that Commerce kept the Jobs Act funding as local as possible.

"It was a good deal for the community. Our taxes pay for the schools and to have the money stay local and be able to hire local companies is very important," said Mauer.

